the current year have not come up to the expectations which the department held out at the time of the entertainment of the temporary staff. But as it may not be advisable to disband the entire staff immediately, before waiting sometime more to assess their real usefulness in the improvement of Excise revenue, the temporary staff is proposed to be continued next year also, subject to a reduction to the extent of Rs. 25,000 in the departmental budget. The Excise Commissioner has already been asked to submit definite proposals for reducing the staff to the absolute minimum requirements. The Statistical branch of the department will continue to function next year also with a view to the correct recording and compilation of trade and customs statistics which is of paramount importance to the State and to the commercial public.

15. *Forest.* The House is aware that the Government had secured the services of a specially trained and qualified officer of the Forest Research Institute, Dehra Dun, to advise them on matters relating to exploitation of the resources of their forests. He has already demonstrated in a very practical way the possibilities of making good use of the soft woods of our forests by subjecting them to Ascu treatment. He is now investigating the possibility of making prefabricated bridge and roof trusses using treated timber in lieu of iron and steel. A provision of Rs '68 of a lakh has been made in the forest budget to enable him to carry on his investigations; and it is hoped that ere long the treated soft woods of our forests will find a ready market even outside the State.

16. *General Administration.* An authorised publication, in a form readily available for easy reference, of the various Acts and Proclamations of the State and the amendments issued thereto from time to time has been a long-felt need, especially to Lawyers and Judges. To remove this want, it is proposed to make arrangements for an official compilation of the Laws of the State on the analogy of the Unrepealed Central Acts of the Government of India. A sum of Rs. 10,000 has been provided for the purpose. The temporary staff in the Central Records specially appointed for sorting and listing the old records of the State, many of which are of historical and archaeological interest, will continue to work next year also.

The Stores Purchase Committee will continue to function next year also as a central agency for arranging for the purchase and supply of the stores required for the various departments of the State service. By this centralisation Government hope that it would be possible to obtain the best materials at the cheapest prices. It will also leave the departmental officers free to devote their full time to the departmental work unsaddled by the direct responsibilities for purchase of large stores.

The experience of the past two years has been very encouraging. The aggregate approximate value of the contracts settled by the Stores Purchase Committee has risen from Rs. 11·16 lakhs in 1113 to

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[Mr. M. Govinda Pillai.]

Rs. 15·06 lakhs up-to-date. As many as 300 firms have registered their names with the Committee. The large increase in the number of competitive quotations has ended to greater economy. The Committee are also attempting, whenever possible, to effect economy by substitution of suitable cheaper materials for costly makes of articles by directing local manufacture of many articles in the P. W. D. Work-shops, in the Central Prison Manufactory, etc., at a much cheaper rate. Another important economy exercised by the Committee is in limiting to a minimum the purchase of stores from Indian Stocks and ordering them as far as possible from abroad on a duty-free basis, thus saving the duty payable on the articles ranging from 20 to 50 per cent of the actual value.

17. *Administration of Justice.* The continuance of the existing temporary Second Judges' Courts and the Temporary Munsiffs' Courts during the whole of the next year, except the one at Pathanamthitta, has been provided for in the Budget. But provision for the continuance of the Conciliation Boards has been made only for 8 months.

A committee has been appointed to go into the whole question of indebtedness with special reference to agricultural and industrial debts and the proper mode of dealing with the same and to report to Government their conclusions *inter-alia* regarding the extent to which compulsion may be resorted to in scaling down and settling the existing debts and the legal procedure to achieve the end. When the suggestions of the Committee are embodied in a suitable Legislative Enactment, as they will be very soon, the constitution of the Conciliation Board may undergo a thorough change.

18. *Central Prison.* To enable convict labour to be used to the best advantage of the Government as well as the convicts themselves, funds have been included in the next year's budget for the purchase of power looms, and warping and weaving machines for the Central Prison. Provision has also been made for the continuance of the Leather Industry. The Jail Manufactory has already offered to supply the leather goods required for the use of the State Police and Military and it is hoped that in the near future the industry will not only be able to stand on its own legs, but will also be a profitable concern.

19. *Police.* While reviewing the Revised Estimates for the current year, I have drawn the attention of the House to the heavy expenditure which the Government, in the discharge of their fundamental duties, had to incur for the preservation of peace and order and the protection of the person and property of the law-abiding citizens of the land. Though the sombre clouds that darkened the atmosphere have vanished to a considerable extent, the horizon is not yet perfectly clear and Government consider that it would be only a cautious measure of prevention that there should be specific provision in the budget for the continuance of the special police and of the Armed Reserve for a few more months next year to deal with any emergent situation, should it

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